- The draft Electricity Bill has been introduced in the Parliament for facilitating comprehensive power sector reforms.
- Power sector reforms have received a boost in pursuance of the centre's decision to provide grants under the Accelerated Power Development and Reform Programme (APDRP), equal to the amount by which states have been able to reduce their power sector deficits.
- The Union Budget 2002-03 has made allocations towards some of the major schemes, which will boost demand especially in construction, housing, steel, and cement sectors. These schemes include PM'S Gram Sadak Yojana, Infrastructure Equity Fund, Urban Reform Incentive Fund, City Challenge Fund, and Accelerated Power Development Reform Programme.
- To improve operating environment of the industry and to boost its competitiveness, the government has enacted several laws, which include enactment of the Competition Act and amendments to SEBI Act. The Competition Act provides for the establishment of a Commission to prevent practices having adverse effect on competition, to promote and sustain competition in markets, to protect the interests of consumers and to ensure freedom of trade carried on by other participants in markets, in India, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The amendments to SEBI Act will strengthen SEBI as regulator of Capital market.
- The Government has launched Golden Quadrilateral projects for Railways, which will further boost demand for Iron & steel industry. Since Iron and steel industry has a strong forward linkage with other segments of the industry, the project will have positive impact on overall industrial growth.

Ill effects of smoking

*98. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item

captioned, "Meat doesn't increase risk of cancer, smoking does". Which appeared in the Hindustan Times, dated the 5th February, 2002;

(b) whether according to medical theory smoking causes half of the world's cancer; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to disseminate the ill effects of smoking through Government electronic media?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Scientific investigations have confirmed the association of smoking with various diseases and have provided additional evidence implicating cigarette smoking as a cause of coronary artery disease, stroke, obstructive lung disease, peripheral vascular disease, pregnancy complications including intra-uterine growth retardation and a variety of neoplasms including cancers of oral cavity, larynx, oesophagus, urinary bladder, kidney, stomach, pancreas, cervix and haematopoietic system. Recent studies have also established close association between tuberculosis and tobacco use. As per the 40-year follow-up study conducted in the United Kingdom, 50 per cent of total smokers die due to smoking related diseases.

The Government has banned tobacco advertisement in the Government-run electronic media and has been taking steps to disseminate information on the ill effects of smoking by telecasting strong health messages throughout the country. Wide publicity was given through the Public Broadcaster media on prohibition of smoking in public places in pursuance to the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court issued on 2.11.2001. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Bill, 2001, which has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 7th March, 2001, inter-alia, contains provisions for prohibiting advertisement of all tobacco products.

ERC for reduction in annual expenditure

†*99. SHRI LAJPAT RAI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.